



## “MAKING MUSIC WITH WHAT YOU’VE GOT”

March 2023

Did you ever notice there are some people who show up for work always in a good mood and always ready to share a laugh, and then there are those who walk around looking like they are carrying the weight of the world. Recently while attending a roll call I was standing at the door of the room handing out some sweets, and this officer walk in with a big smile, very well kept. His uniform was just right, clean, well pressed and all his equipment was just right. We chatted a bit, and I asked the officer "what is the secret for the great attitude?" He said " Rabbi sometimes you have to make music with what you have left". And he continued "Let me tell you the story".... Making Music With What You Have Left"

On Nov. 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the famous violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child and has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches. To see him walk across the stage one step at the time, painfully and slowly is a sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, put his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extend the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up his violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play. By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remained silent while he undoes the clasps on his legs, they wait until he is ready to play. But this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap - it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what he had to do.

People who were there that night thought to themselves:

"We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off the stage - to either find another violin or else find another string for this one. Or wait for someone to bring him another."

But he didn't. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity, as they had never heard before.

Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that you know that. But that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing and recomposing the piece in his head. At one point it sounded like he was de-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before. When he

finished, there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of the auditorium. Everyone was on their feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything they could to show how much they appreciated what he had done. He smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet the audience, not boastfully, but in a quiet reverent tone:

"YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES IT IS THE ARTIST'S TASK TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH MUSIC YOU CAN STILL MAKE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT."

What a powerful line that is. And who knows? Perhaps that is the way of life - not just for an artist but for all of us. Here is a man who has prepared all his life to make music on a violin with four strings, who all of a sudden, in the middle of a concert, finds himself with only three strings and the music he made that night with just three strings was more beautiful, more sacred, more memorable, than any that had ever made before, when he had four strings.

So perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live, is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left. We are living in an era faced with many challenges, political, financial, emotional, where so much has changed, let us stop for a moment and think how we can make beautiful music with what we have left. And please never forget the next parable...

Sometimes you just have to let go"...

Jack was walking along a steep cliff one day when he accidentally got too close to the edge and fell. On the way down he grabbed a branch, which stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet. He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff. So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something. "HELP! HELP! Is anyone up there? "HELP!" He yelled for a long time, but no one heard him. He was about to give up when he heard a voice.

"Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, yes! I can hear you. I'm down here!"

"I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?"

"Yes, but who are you, and where are you?"

"I am the Lord, Jack. I'm everywhere."

"The Lord? You mean, G-D?"

"That's Me."

"G-d, please help me! I promise if, you'll get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good person. I'll serve You for the rest of my life."

"Easy on the promises, Jack. Let's get you off from there, then we can talk."

"Now, here's what I want you to do. Listen carefully."

"I'll do anything, Lord. Just tell me what to do."

"Okay. Let go of the branch."

"What?"

"I said, let go of the branch." Just trust Me. Let go."

There was a long silence.

Finally Jack yelled, "HELP! HELP! IS ANYONE ELSE UP THERE I CAN TALK TO?"

Have you ever felt like Jack? We say that we want to know the will of G-d, but when we find out what it is, we can't handle it. Sounds too scary, too difficult. We decide to look elsewhere. When G-d says, "Let go of the things that stand between you and Me, and trust Me with your life," it sounds pretty scary. But when we let go, we find freedom, safety and comfort in His hands."

And before we close, some humor from the "Moshe Files" to keep you smiling:

Norma and Sonia were talking about their grandchildren after the holidays. Norma said, "My daughter-in-law stopped making my grandchildren send their 'thank you' notes. Each year I sent the grandchildren a card with a generous check inside. I always received a lovely 'thank you' note. However, since my daughter-in-law stopped making the grandkids send thank you notes, I never hear from them." Sonia said, "My daughter-in-law never made the grandchildren send 'thank you' notes. I too send them a very generous check. However, for the past several years, I hear from them within a week after they receive it. In fact, they each pay me a personal visit."

"Wow," remarked Norma. "I wish mine would do that." "You can, Norma, you can."

"How?" Norma asked "Simple. Do what I do. Don't sign the check."....End...Lol

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, May G-d bless you and keep you safe. Should you need an ear to listen, shoulder to lean on or perhaps have some good humor to share, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

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